

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00 /091 W

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R 160940Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7379

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 14492

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, FTFR, SO

SUBJECT: ATTEMPT ON ALI AREF'S LIFE - A SOMALI VIEW

1. SOMALI COUNSELOR MOHAMMED GARAD RETURNED DEC. 6 FROM A BRIEF VISIT TO THE TFAI. HE HAS GIVEN EMBOFF THE FOLLOWING VIEWS:

2. GARAD STATED THAT MOST OBSERVERS, BOTH AFAR AND ISSA, NOW REGARD THE DEC. 5 GRENADE ATTACK ON TFAI GOVERNMENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT ALI AREF BOURHAN AS A "PUT UP JOB." REASONING IS AS FOLLOWS: ALI AREF HAD BEEN OUTRAGED AS THE LARGE CROWDS (BOTH ISSA AND AFAR) THAT WELCOMED THE POPULAR AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE LEAGUE (LPAI) LEADER HASSAN GOULED SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER. HASSAN WAS RETURNING FROM A LONG SWING THROUGH AFRICA AND A VISIT TO THE UN, SEEKING SUPPORT FOR THE PLAI. ALI AREF WISHED (1) TO PREVENT A SIMILAR LARGE SCALE POPULAR DEMONSTRATION WHEN AHMED DINI, THE OTHER LEADER, RETURNED TO DJIBOUTI

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DEC. 6, AND (2) TO TIE THE RESULTING LACK OF DEMONSTRATED SOMALI

SUPPORT FOR THIS AFAR LEADER TO ISSA ANTI-AFAR POLITICS. FOLLOWING THE ATTACK ON ALI AREF'S CAR (IN WHICH ONE GRENADE LANDED ON THE ROOF, ANOTHER LANDED NEAR THE EXHAUSE PIPE, AND TWO WERE THROWN BY THE ESCAPING ASSAILANT), THE GOVERNMENT DECREED THAT NO GROUPS LARGER THAN FOUR PERSONS COULD ASSEMBLE. IN GARAD'S OPINION, BY THIS DECREE ALI AREF HOPED TO PRECLUDE ANY WELCOMING PARTY FOR AHMED DINI UPON HIS ARRIVAL.

COMMENT: GARAD'S ANALYSIS IS OBVIOUSLY SKEWED AGAINST AFAR LEADER ALI AREF. IT IS HARD TO RECONCILE ALLEGED USE OF FOUR GRENADES, SOME OF WHICH LANDED ON AREF'S VEHICLE WITH "PUT UP JOB." FRENCH COLLEAGUE TOLD EMBOFF, HOWEVER, THAT ALI AREF'S CAR WAS ALMOST COMPLETELY UNDAMAGED BY THE GRENADES. YET FRENCH OFFICER ADMITTED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED NO WORD ON WHO ALI AREF'S ASSAILANT WAS OR WHETHER OR NOT TFAI FORCES HAD CAPTURED HIM. END COMMENT.

3. GARAD, WHO WAS PAYING HIS FIRST VISIT TO DJIBOUTI SINCE 1965, PROFESSED TO BE SURPRISED AT THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT AND THE NUMBER OF SOMALIS LIVING THERE. " EVERYONE SPOKE SOMALI," HE SAID, AND ADDED, "THERE IS ONLY ONE SMALL AFAR QUARTER." IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION, GARAD ADMITTED THAT MOST ISSA/SOMALIS, WHILE DESIRING INDEPENDENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, DID NOT SPEAK ANSCHLUSS WITH SOMALIA IMMEDIATELY AFTER INDEPENDENCE. HUMMEL

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